

Fellowship

The newsletter of the NHS Retirement Fellowship

Summer strawberries wins prize

Stuart McGough, from Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde branch, was the Fellowship's winner in the "Seasonal Colours" competition with his picture "Summer Strawberries" (right).



"There were some amazing pictures and the judges had a hard job picking the winners" said Anthea Graham, Photography Group Co-ordinator.



Winter

The competition is run jointly with the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship and the CSRf winner was Malcolm Gibbon with his picture "Winter."

The next competition, with a closing deadline of 30 November is on the theme of "Travel." Full information is on the website nhsrf.org.uk/PhotoCompWebsite.pdf, or contact Anthea on photography@nhsrf.org.uk. There are prizes of £200 for the winners.

Branches in membership boom

Many branches enjoyed a membership boom in 2013-14 as the winners of the Sefton Cup for the highest percentage increase, and the membership cup for the number of new members demonstrated. Scarborough won the Sefton Cup with a 58% increase, closely followed by Merthyr and Cynon Valley on 54% and Barnsley and Plymouth both with 32%.

The membership cup was shared by three branches – Oxford, Colchester and Croydon, each of which gained 23 new members.



Cynthia Matthews, Fellowship chairman, presents the Sefton Cup to Colin Billington (regional representative) who received it on behalf of Scarborough branch



Audrey Harris (vice chairman) presents the membership cup to representatives from Croydon, Colchester and Oxford

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Here we go! Director inspires with vision of the future

A new vision for a larger, higher profile Fellowship was outlined to members in a lively and inspiring report from the Director, John Rostill.

He began by reminding members that he had promised to spend time listening since he took up the job last September. He had visited branches and attended regional meetings and, he said, "I have come to learn that this is an organisation that I am proud to be part of."

"What we need to do is to move more people in the direction of helping to run the branches and get involved..."

"But it is like most other organisations. There are a group of people that do everything. They make it happen. There's another group that only want to come to the meeting. They don't necessarily want to do anything else. Then there's another group in the middle that by your influence will move in one direction or the other.

"What we need to do is to move more people in the direction of helping to run the branches and get involved in the wider Fellowship. This is a members' organisation. Run by the members for the members. We have to understand and accept that not everyone wants to get involved. But we do need more people to support and be involved – and I hope we shall be able to inspire people to do that."

Travels reveal variety

His travels across the country had revealed many differences in the environment and the culture of each branch – and in the level of support from the NHS locally.

Life had changed since Irene James proposed the foundation of the Fellowship in 1978 to add an extra dimension to the lives of retired staff, and the Fellowship must change as well. "But you can't change a big organisation quickly. You have to do it by biteable bites."

"You have to have a sense of direction, of where it is you are going. One of the things I have managed to do in the last 10 months is to organise a strategy discussion, which was endorsed by National Council in May.

"Our aim is that by the end of five years the Fellowship will have a much higher profile within the NHS..."

Aiming for higher profile

"Our aim is that by the end of five years the Fellowship will have a much higher profile within the NHS and will be well known to those who retire as offering services and benefits to members.

"It will have a reliable and sustainable source of income, it will continue to provide welfare and benevolent services to its members – and I hope membership will increase to 50,000 and there will be at least a 10% increase in the number of branches.

"Some of you may be surprised by 50,000. But there are 750,000 people retired from the NHS. We need to do more to encourage retirees to join. We need to provide services that appeal. We need to meet the requirement of the English, Scottish and Welsh governments. We need recruitment campaigns and we need to review our structures to make sure they are fit for purpose."

Recognising our experience

The Fellowship was good at lots of things, he said. What we have not done yet is to persuade the NHS to recognise that. Even with

membership as it is now, we have half a million years of NHS service between us. “Why would you not use that?” he said. “Why would you not take advantage of that depth of knowledge and practical experience?”

Action was already under way through NHS organisations to publicise the Fellowship at seminars and conferences and a new, nationwide Fellowship award is to be promoted for NHS employers who recognise and meet the needs of their retired staff.

“Some of you may be surprised... But there are 750,000 people retired from the NHS. We need to do more to encourage retirees to join.”

John said that the national newsletter, which failed to appear in March because the company went out of business, would be resurrected in September. The Fellowship could join campaigns – for example on postal services or hospital parking charges.

And all branches were encouraged to get closer to their local NHS organisations – for example by inviting the chief executive or chairman to be president, or for individuals to become members or even governors of foundation trusts. Trusts could be asked to include information on websites and make it the normal course that people leaving the NHS join their local branch – perhaps by paying their subscription for three years.

“I have come to learn that this is an organisation that I am proud to be part of”



Hold MPs to account says patron

A call to action to members to play their part in holding politicians to account over their approach to the NHS was the climax of an uplifting welcoming speech from the Fellowship's Patron, Ken Jarrold.

He began with some good news. The Commonwealth Fund, a respected and independent organisation, has recently done a comparison of health care in 11 leading countries. “You will be pleased and proud, as I am, to know that despite its many failings, the NHS was ranked first overall” he said. “Given that we are going through the longest financial crisis in our history, that's a very remarkable achievement.”

“Despite everything” he went on, “the NHS commands enormous support. People say it's what makes them proud to be British and that it is integral to social equality.”

But at the same time people are beginning to be concerned that free health care is under pressure and it may not be possible to sustain it.

“This is our last conference before the general election. I would ask you to ask all the candidates in your constituency whether they support the founding principles of the NHS. We may need to hold all those who are elected MPs to account. Whatever your views – please do that.”

The Irene James Lecture

Use all the skills to boost primary care says CQC inspector

More use should be made of the many skills available in primary care including nurses and pharmacists, Professor Steve Field told conference in a wide-ranging Irene James Lecture.

Professor Field was appointed Chief Inspector of General Practice for the Care Quality Commission last year and has begun the task of making sure that all 8,300 GP practices deliver safe, effective, compassionate, high quality care, and leading improvements in services.

He described how in his visits to practices he had discovered huge variations in quality, in prescribing and in access to services. Some premises were very poor, some practices worked in isolation. His remit included looking at services for different groups of patients – older people, people with long



Professor Steve Field

term conditions, children, students, people in vulnerable circumstances (like the homeless) and people with mental health problems.

“I have been brought in to give the NHS a bit of backbone and be a bit less soft and cuddly” he said, and explained that there would soon be a “special measures”

arrangement to help practices improve their systems and their service.

He highlighted examples of outstanding practice in some areas and suggested that primary care needed more joined up working with other agencies, and better use of all staff.

“Nurses and pharmacists are so much better at managing long term conditions” he said. “We should reserve doctors to do what they are trained for and nurses for what they are trained for. It would be lovely if we recognised that rather than scare mongering about a shortage of doctors.”

In a lively question session which followed he expressed himself an enthusiast for patient support groups and said that in dealing with poor practice the CQC would be seeking to support improvements, report very bad practice to the General Medical Council, and publish outcomes for practices.

“Patients want to be seen at the right time by the right person, to be treated with dignity, to be cared for when ill and referred to a specialist promptly if necessary. We are not going to tolerate practices that are given six months notice and do not improve.”

He said there was also a need to educate the public about how best to use the NHS. “You will hear a lot more from us about what should be happening” he said. “We are really only in the foothills now.”

Listening project wins innovation award

An award winning innovation aimed at making sure that people in nursing homes are safe, well cared for and enjoy living there was described to conference by representatives from Wales.

The Care Home 'Ask and Talk' (CHAA^T) initiative sprang from discussions at Gwent branch after the Winterbourne report where members "just had an idea" that by going in to nursing homes and talking to people, they could help make life better.

They approached the Aneurin Bevan Health Board who took up the idea and worked in partnership with the branch to develop the project which has now won the award for outstanding innovation in Wales in 2014.

Working together

Tanya Strange, Divisional Nurse from the Health Board, and Margaret Went, chairman of Gwent branch, explained that they worked together to develop training for volunteers and to put together all the checks, safeguards and procedures needed to make sure the process worked well.

Then the eight volunteers spent time with patients and sometimes relatives, talking to them about their experiences and hearing stories of



Gwent members Barbara Davies and Margaret Went, part of the CHAA^T team

really good practice and of things that could be changed.

"It was very important that we told them what we were NOT there to do" said Margaret. "We were not care givers, an extra pair of hands to help them walk or go to the toilet. We were not inspectors. We were just there to listen. If they had a complaint our advice was to go to the matron.

"They enjoyed talking"

"Older people welcomed the opportunity to speak in private. They enjoyed talking. The relatives said it had been a long time coming and were really pleased at the service being offered to their loved ones. At first the nursing staff were wary, but afterwards they were pleased to see such a positive influence."

"For us, as volunteers, it was giving something back. We have a lot of expertise between us. It's doing something we think is worthwhile and, hopefully, making nursing homes safer places to be."

For Tanya the success of the project has opened new possibilities. Plans are already being made to roll it out to other homes in Wales. "But why only in Gwent?" she challenged members. "Your mission today is to get CHAA^T in every corner of the UK."

Margaret Went

A few days after returning home from the national conference, Margaret died suddenly at home.

Margaret had been a ward sister in the geriatric department in St Woolos Hospital, Newport, until her retirement in 2008. She was very active in her local community and also in the Samaritans, for whom she had worked for 25 years. Six months ago she became chair of the Gwent branch, having previously been membership secretary. She was very proud of the success of the CHAA^T project in the recent NHS Wales awards.

Margaret had three children, nine grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Members from Gwent branch and Cynthia Matthews, NHSRF chair and John Toman, Development Officer for Wales were among the large congregation at her funeral.

Cavell Nurses' Trust Spread the word says Kate

Kate Tompkins, Chief Executive of the Cavell Nurses' Trust delivered a plea to Fellowship members to spread the word about the work of the Trust in helping nurses in need.

The Trust was set up in memory of Edith Cavell, a nurse from Norfolk who became matron of a school of nursing in Brussels before the first world war and led its work in treating casualties from both sides when war broke out, famously saying that every man is somebody's son, husband or brother. She helped some 200 British soldiers to escape, and was

arrested, court martialled and shot at dawn.

The Trust supports nurses, midwives and health care assistants in need. Kate joined it after a distinguished career in nursing.

"We want to get the message out: if you find yourself in difficulty because of ill health, disability, or a small pension, we work to do our best to help you" she said. "We get about 1,000 enquiries a year and make grants totalling about £450,000.

"We work with others to put together a package to help people live independently and with dignity. You could bake cakes or climb mountains for us, but what I would really like you to do more than anything else is if your friends,



Kate Tompkins

colleagues and members are in difficulty, tell them about the Cavell Nurses' Trust. We owe it to our colleagues."

Delegates were delighted to hear that it had been announced that day that Edith Cavell will feature on one of the special coins being minted to commemorate the first world war.

Colchester's clarity wins newsletter trophy

Colchester were the winners of the newsletter competition this year for their outstandingly clear and concise newsletter which the judges thought was a good demonstration of what can be done without specialist skills in design or expensive printing.

Marilyn Beardmore (Wales) and Joan Robinson (SW Thames) joined national newsletter editor Andrew Moss in making the choice

and praised the Colchester entry as a model of clarity and brevity, full of relevant and useful information.

Runner up was Redbridge and Waltham Forest, a regular in the top three, and Highly Commended was Kettering. The judges also gave special mention to Suffolk West branch, which has only been going a year and produced a readable and enthusiastic "first anniversary" issue.



John Rostill presents the newsletter trophy to Michael Bennett, Regional Representative for NE Thames, who received it on behalf of Colchester branch



Forthright views on nursing home and residential care were expressed in a stimulating “Question Time” debate expertly chaired by our patron, Ken Jarrold.

The panel were Charles Ashton, Medical Director South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust; Tanya Strange, Divisional Nurse, Aneurin Bevan Health Board; Pauline Shields, Community Advisor, The Patients’ Association and Dag Saunders, Chair of Telford and Wrekin Health Watch.

They all agreed that all care home staff should be effectively trained – but as Dag pointed out, we often place vulnerable, dependent people in the care of people on zero hours contracts and low wages. Society needed to take a different view. Charles Ashton agreed: “Nothing is for nothing” he said. “We have to think about paying more for care.”

Standards

Questions on the standards set for care, how they are enforced and how retired NHS staff could be more involved prompted Pauline Shields

Panel offers strong views on home care

to observe that standards are often the minimum – but in a competing market, homes were going to have to raise the bar to attract residents.

The panel was uneasy about the use of CCTV in care homes – except possibly for suicidal patients. “It’s a lazy way to monitor standards” said Tanya. “You can’t drive up standards with a camera.”

Integration

They also agreed that health and social care should be better integrated and although in some places there was strong collaboration, the division of funding between social care and health care could poison the debate. Dag Saunders agreed. “It’s barmy” he said. “There is no sense in separating the money. They should get over it and the money should sit in one pot.”

On the value of community hospitals (said to be making a come back in future policies) there was sharp division. Dag was wary of centrally directed urban based services and favoured “bottom

up” services and Pauline said local hospitals were loved by their community. But Charles said he would close them all and invest the money on care at home.

Still no answers

There was no doubt that the panel would like to see an end to means testing for nursing home care, but most felt it was unaffordable – although Dag was unequivocal: “I don’t understand how we have come to a position where we are screwing the most vulnerable people and we have money to maintain nuclear weapons” he said.

Will there ever be a time when we do not need homes? was the final question. Tanya noted that they don’t make the profit they used to. Charles wished it would be possible, but longer life also meant more illness.

Summing up, Ken Jarrold said it was an indictment of both politicians and our society that we have not tackled one of the problems of our age.

Stepping down after valued service

Four members of the National Council stepped down this year after long and loyal service.

Helen Anderson and Renee Gibb, from Scotland, have both been



Fellowship Director John Rostill (centre) with retiring trustees Marie Veerasamy, Helen Anderson, Renee Gibb and Frank Pyke

members for many years and Renee has been chairman of the Federation of Scottish branches and a member of the NHHRF Benevolent Fund committee.

Marie Veerasamy has represented West Midlands for many years and Frank Pyke South East Thames.

The new representatives on National Council are Jeanie Sutherland and Win Morrison, from Scotland, Sue Williams from Walsall branch in West Midlands and Jack Yan, from Bexley will be standing in for Frank Pyke in South East Thames until an election can take place.

FELLOWSHIP HOLIDAY NEWS



CYPRUS 12 to 19 October 2014:

A few places left to join other NHSRF members on this holiday to Paphos, a UNESCO world heritage town full of archaeological sites and a vibrant and pretty harbour.

Next year:

May/June: Torquay and the Devon Riviera

September: Blackpool illuminations

September/November: Marrakech.

City explorer break.

For more information contact Della Holidays, Coads Green, Cornwall PL15 7LY. 01934 420318 or enquiries@dellaholidays.co.uk. Web: www.dellaholidays.co.uk or go to

Jamaica couple enjoy Fellowship



Two delegates attending conference for the first time prompted special interest because they live for much of the year in Jamaica.

John Wayne Radcliffe ("my father liked westerns") and Shirley Radcliffe-Jones share their time between Jamaica and Liverpool.

John's first wife Philomena came

from the Phillipines and worked in the NHS at the hospital for nervous diseases in London. After she died from cancer, John was on his own until he got a phone call from Shirley, who needed help with the accounts for her business.

Shirley came to England from a small village in Jamaica when she was 16. "I had known her for about 30 years" said John. "Then I got this phone call out of the blue about 15 years ago. I sorted out her problems, the tax man withdrew his demands and sent her a chunk of money back."

John read about the Fellowship in the NHS pension newsletter and joined about a year ago. They were both pleased to be at conference and to find so many people who came up to talk to them.

Outstanding exhibits in craft show

There were some outstanding exhibits in the arts and craft and needlework exhibition at the conference.

Sue Lloyd, from Suffolk West branch won first place in the art and craft contest with her ballet dancer picture, done in pastels, and Audrey Allaker, from East Herts, won the needlework section with her wool knitted coat, woven with mohair.

Highly commended in arts and crafts were Paula Johnson, Good Hope, (Christmas wreath) and Joan Barlow, Wolverhampton, (rag rug). In needlework: Jennifer Broderick, S.



Audrey Allaker and Sue Lloyd with their winning exhibits

Manchester, (black work embroidery) and Mary Jo Gorham, Basildon and Thurrock (baby shawl).

New for Scotland

The Federation of Scottish branches has a new team of honorary officers. Jeanie Sutherland (Highland branch) is the new chair, and she is joined by Win Morrison (Angus), Grace Clarke (Fife) and Liz McGibbon (Glasgow).

They take over from Archie Fleming, Renee Gibb, John Dow and Helen Anderson.

This year's annual seminar will be on 15 October. Places cost £10, branch secretaries have the details.

Wessex conference day

Audrey Harris, the Fellowship's vice chairman joined members at the Wessex Conference Day in May when members heard an interesting talk from a local GP about commissioning groups.

Wendy Lindley, Regional

Representative, organised the day and Chris Iremonger, Southern Development Officer was there to bring members up to date with activities and new branches.

Benevolent fund progress

The Fellowship's Benevolent Fund had an income of nearly £1,500 and awarded three grants totalling £1,120 in 2013-14 the fund's chairman Ethel Armstrong reported.

Ethel thanked branches that make donations and encouraged others to make the fund their charity for the year. She stressed that applications are completely confidential and the committee "take as gospel" what is written on them. The maximum grant is £800, but the committee also works with other charities to increase the value. The balance carried forward is over £24,000.

New branches

Eight new branches of the Fellowship opened in 2013-14 and there are three more starting up soon.

The new branches are: Walsall and District, Taunton and District, Bath and District, Cromer and District, King's (King's College, London), King's Lynn, York and Shropshire.

Yeovil, Hammersmith (west London) and Northwick Park (north west London) are starting soon. For contact details for the new branches see the NHSRF website (www.nhsrf.org.uk) or phone central office on 01305 361317.

Free help

Tax Volunteers, a national charity that provides free tax advice to help older people on low incomes, was one of the popular stands at the conference.

Details of the service offered are available from the website www.taxvol.org.uk The charity has volunteer tax advisers spread across the UK, most of whom are practising or retired tax professionals, including retired HM Revenue and Customs staff. They give their time and expertise free of charge because they recognise how difficult the tax system can be for older people who can't afford professional advice.

Advice is free, independent and confidential and can be given on any personal tax matter, large or small.

west London) are starting soon. For contact details for the new branches see the NHSRF website (www.nhsrf.org.uk) or phone central office on 01305 361317.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Chief Exec meets the members



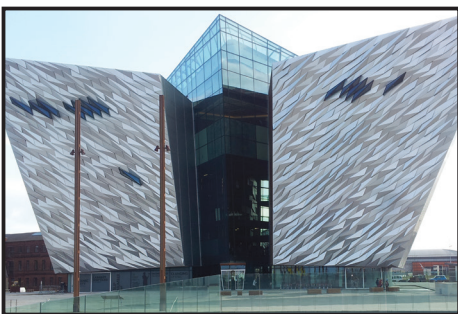
Nick Hulme, Chief Executive of Ipswich Hospital (left) joined members of East Suffolk branch in February and confessed he had no idea what the Fellowship was about and how it operates.

“We invited him to meet him and for him to meet our

members” said Brenda Simmons, branch chairman and secretary. “He spent some time circulating among members and answering

their queries – although we made the point before he came that this was not a question and answer session. He explained a little about the problems the hospital has, and how they are being tackled. It was a very worthwhile visit – informative for Nick and for us.”

Titanic experience



Ayrshire and Arran members shared a wonderful trip when they

visited the Titanic experience in Belfast in April.

Royal Berks reaches 25

Royal Berkshire branch celebrated 25 years with lunch and a cake as members – including some who joined at the first meeting in 1988 – recalled events from the past. The branch continues to meet monthly and looks forward to another year.

Patrick’s tales make a book

Patrick Poon, one of the Fellowship’s postal members (not attached to a branch) gave an interesting talk to Plymouth and District branch about his life as a male nurse, which has now been published as a book “Tales from a Male Nurse.”

Patrick travelled from Hong Kong to England in 1969 to become a pupil nurse and rose over the years



to become Deputy Director. After 27 years in the NHS he changed direction to work in care homes becoming Deputy Matron and Trainer. Later he gained Cert Ed. Status and became a college lecturer.

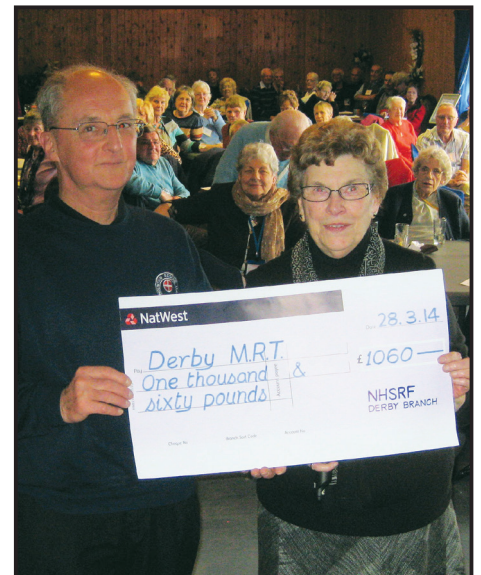
“Having read his book, I recommend it to all members” said Frances Lane, Plymouth branch secretary.

Sandwell generosity



Ann Harrison, secretary of Sandwell branch presents the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Mrs Linda Horton with a cheque for £200 towards her annual charities, one of which is BUDS, Better Understanding of Dementia in Sandwell.

Derby aid rescue team



Derby branch handed more than £1,000 to Derby Mountain Rescue team at their meeting in March.

The cheque was presented to Robin Goodchild from Derby Mountain Rescue by Mollie Clark whose late husband Phil had suggested the team as the branch annual charity. Money was raised from activities including a bazaar, donations at meetings and from the walking group.

OBITUARIES

Derrick Wright

Derrick Wright, an active member and supporter of Norwich and District branch for more than 20 years, died in February. A friend and colleague to many, he managed and developed the stores and transport department for United Norwich Hospitals until his retirement in 1992. He leaves a widow, Janet, who was branch secretary for a number of years. He was troubled by ill health in recent years, but it never stopped his love of gardening, holidays and music.

Albert Twiney

Eileen Smith

John & Edna Conibear

Royal Berkshire branch have lost four notable members in the last few months. Albert Twiney was a staunch member who gave great support to his wife Mary when she was chair of the branch. The couple recently celebrated 60 years of marriage and later Albert's 90th birthday. Another long standing member, Eileen Smith, died in October.

John and Edna Conibear had been loyal members for many years and John celebrated his 90th birthday in 2010. It came as a shock when John died in December after a short illness. Members remember fondly the garden parties

at their house and John's interest in photography. After John died Edna, a former chair of the branch, experienced ill health herself. She died in a nursing home in February.

Colin Simmons



Colin Simmons, who died in January, joined East Suffolk branch four years ago, some years after he met his future wife Brenda, who was already a member. He soon joined the and later became regional representative. His input to the branch was considerable, and his enthusiasm and dedication will be greatly missed.

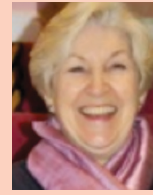
Joan Pike

Susanna McOnegal

Bradford branch are sorry to report the death of two members. Joan Pike, an active committee and life member, died in December. Her nursing career began in 1942 and she retired as Senior Nursing Officer at Bradford Royal Infirmary in 1984, when she was awarded the MBE for services to nursing.

Susanna McOnegal, a long standing member, was a midwife in hospital and in the community in Bradford. She died in January.

Gillian Oakeshott



East Surrey branch report with sadness the death of Gillian Oakeshott, who died in June. Gillian worked as an ECG technician at East Surrey

Hospital and was greatly appreciated and respected by staff and patients alike.

Gillian was cheerful, warm, friendly, non-judgemental and was adored by her many friends. She had many interests including walking, singing in the church choir, listening to music, reading and sharing lunch or tea with friends.

Joan O'Callaghan

Lawrence McGovern

Huddersfield Branch has been saddened by the death of its last two founder members, Joan O'Callaghan and Lawrence McGovern.

Joan served in the WRNS followed by hotel employment before working at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, latterly as Dining Room Supervisor. She served on the branch committee for 23 years.

Lawrence McGovern saw war service in the 8th Army and then worked in the War Office. He later moved back to Huddersfield and followed in his father's footsteps in psychiatric nursing at Storthes Hall Hospital, retiring as Deputy Matron. He served on the committee for 23 years, having a spell as treasurer and auditor.

Morpeth host lively conference

More than 100 delegates from the north east attended the 25th regional conference, hosted by Morpeth branch at the Park Hotel in Tynemouth.

They heard invigorating speeches from the Fellowship's patron Ken Jarrold, the director John Rostill and chairman Dr. Cynthia Matthews followed by a fascinating talk by the Air Ambulance and an insight in to the workings of Cavell Nurses. The conference was delighted to present a donation to both causes.

The photograph (right) shows Rose Das and Sybil Wilkinson, who celebrated their birthday the same day, with national president Ethel Armstrong and branch chairman Audrey Kimberley.



Sign up as a Foundation Trust member, says Ethel

If there's an NHS Trust near you that has foundation trust status or is seeking it – get involved and get yourselves known. That's the message from the Fellowship's president Ethel Armstrong who is a member of two foundation trusts in the north east and has been able to help branches build bridges and boost membership.

Foundation Trusts have to recruit thousands of members as evidence that they are in touch with their local community. "Who better to be members of a Trust than members of the Fellowship?" said Ethel.

"It gets you known. It gets the Trust



to recognise we are a body of responsible people. We are still getting Trusts who say they have never heard of the Fellowship. We need to get involved."

Being a Foundation Trust member involves nothing more than completing a form and sending it in. You can get the form

from the Trust office, or often download it from a web site.

"They send you information about what's going on. You don't have to do any more than collect it from the letter box. It's up to you how much you want to get involved. There are so many things happening which we could not

envisage even five years ago. Most Trusts will invite you to something three or four times a year. It gives you a chance to meet the governors."

Anyone can be a foundation trust member and it does not require particular knowledge or skill. "Whether you were a professor or you peeled potatoes, it doesn't matter, you can still contribute" said Ethel. "You can tell the Trust about your experience of the NHS – good or bad."

Membership of a trust is free. It gives you a chance to share your thoughts and ideas about the way the trust delivers care. But it also means you can raise awareness of the NHSRF and build the fortunes of your branch.

NW Surrey spread their wings



North West Surrey branch have been taking full advantage of the motorway network to travel further afield.

In April they went to Bath, taking with them blue badge guide, John Garrod who has accompanied their London walks. A free morning was followed by a gentle stroll around the back streets where trip organiser Felicity Parkin enjoyed a much deserved ice cream.

In May members travelled in the opposite direction to Faversham and Whitstable, starting with a guided tour of Faversham, a market town best known as the home of Shepherd Neame brewery. Then off to Whitstable on one of the best days of the year for a walk around the harbour and a final stop at Brogdale, home of the National Fruit Collection.

Book Club tops 200

The Fellowship's Book Club, run jointly with the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship, now has more than 200 active participants. To learn more contact David Tickner, Book Club Co-ordinator on 020 8691 7411 or by email to bookclub@csrf.org.uk

Morpeth honour members at 25th celebrations

Morpeth branch awarded honorary membership to Eve Short and Bill Thomas, the two remaining founding members, when members held a special party to celebrate the 25th anniversary.

National president Ethel Armstrong joined the celebrations and had baked and iced a cake for the occasion. She presented plaques to Eve and Bill and recalled some amusing anecdotes during a very enjoyable



afternoon. The party was held at Ulgham WI, who provided the tea.

Bromley relish "magnificent" Wales

More than 30 members of Bromley branch had a memorable holiday in North Wales in June with fine weather, magnificent scenery and some interesting days out which included Anglesey, Snowdonia and Llangollen.



"Winter." They stayed in Llandudno: "a great town with a beautiful promenade and pier" and completed their holiday with a trip on the steam railway through the mountains from Portmadog to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

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